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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9445
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 4287

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, CI
SUBJECT: HUNGER STRIKE -- CARDINAL READY TO CALL FOR TERMINATION

REF: SANTIAGO 4248

1. IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE GOC HAS DECIDED AGAINST SETTING UP A COMMISSION TO LOOK INTO THE PROBLEM OF MISSING PERSONS. THIS DECISION MAY BE LINKED TO THE PENDING VISIT OF THE UN'S AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON CHILE. IN AN EFFORT TO END THE STRIKE BEFORE AGREEMENT ON THE WORKING GROUP VISIT IS ANNOUNCED (BEING DELAYED IN NEW YORK UNTIL JUNE 9 SO THAT PINOCHET CAN MAKE THE INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT HERE JUNE 8), CARDINAL SILVA IS EXPECTED TO ISSUE A SIX-POINT DECLARATION LATER TODAY, JUNE 6. REPORTEDLY THE STATEMENT WAS APPROVED THIS MORNING BY THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF BISHOPS.

2. THE STATEMENT IS EXPECTED TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING PINTS: (A) THAT WORLD PUBLIC OPINION HAS BECOME SENSITIZED TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE DISAPPEARED PERSONS AND THEIR RELATIVES; (B) THAT THE CHURCH WILL GO ON HELPING ALL WHO SUFFER; (C) THAT THE GOC HAS SHOWN SOME UNDERSTANDING IN THIS MATTER; (D) THAT THE CHURCH WILL CONTINUE TO HELP TO FIND THE MISSING PERSONS;
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(E) THAT THE PROBLEM OF THE DISAPPEARED SHOULD BE MENTIONED DURING MASS IN CATHOLIC CHURCHES EVERY SUNDAY, THAT THE FAITHFUL SHOULD PRAY FOR A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM AND THAT THEY WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO FAST ON FRIDAYS; AND, (F) ACCORDINGLY, THAT THE HUNGER STRIKERS SHOULD END THEIR STRIKE.

3. THE RELATIVES GROUP IS UNHAPPY WITH THIS OUTCOME AND

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THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AT THIS TIME THAT THE STRIKERS WILL IN FACT GIVE UP. THEY ARE SUPPORTED BY SOME FACTIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH. A WELL PLACED INTERNATIONAL AGENCY SOURCE, HOWEVER, BELIEVES THAT MOST OF THE STRIKERS WILL OBEY THE CARDINAL'S REQUEST.

4. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS: WE HAVE NO REPORTS OF ADDITIONAL HOSPITAL-IZATIONS SINCE YESTERDAY. THE JUNE 6 NEWSPAPERS REPORT THAT 21 ARTISTS HAVE JOINED THE STRIKE FOR 24 HOURS. THE BRITISH EMBASSY IS NOW OCCUPIED BY FOUR TRADE UNIONISTS (COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS, WE BELIEVE) WHO INTEND TO REMAIN FOR 48 HOURS. THE BELGIAN CHARGE ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM BRUSSELS MADE A DEMARCH TO INTERIOR UNDER-SECRETARY MONTERO THE MORNING OF JUNE 6 EXPRESSING THE CONCERN OF HIS GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE STRIKE AND THE PROBLEM OF THE MISSING PERSONS. THE DUTCH AMBASSADOR IS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO MAKE A SIMILAR DEMARCHE BY LATER TODAY IF A SOLUTION DOES NOT APPEAR IMMINENT. THE NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN QUERIED BY OSLO REGARDING POSSIBLE ACTION AND INTENDS TO RECOMMEND A VISIT BY TWO PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATES IF THE STRIKE CONTINUES. NONE OF THE OTHER EUROPEANS, OR THE CANADIANS, HAVE INSTRUCTIONS AT THIS TIME.

5. COMMENT: THE BELIEF HERE IS THAT THE GOC BACKED OFF THE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT ON A SPECIAL INVESTIGATING COMMISSION LARGELY BECAUSE THE IMMINENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGREEMENT ON THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP VISIT WILL REDUCE INTERNATION PRESSURE FOR OTHER
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STEPS AT THIS TIME, WHILE RIGHT WING SUPPORTERS OF THIS REGIME WOULD HAVE VIEWED BOTH ACTIONS, COMING IN CLOSE SUCCESSION, AS EXCESSIVE YIELDING TO PRESSURE. THE GOC WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE STRIKE OVER BY THE TIME PINOCHET ANNOUNCES THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP VISIT JUNE 8, IF ONLY TO AVOID INTERNAL CHARGES OF ACTING UNDER PRESSURE. AN EARLY VISIT BY THE GROUP IS ONE OF THE DEMANDS OF THE RELATIVES OF THE MISSING PERSONS.

6. THE SIX POINTS OF THE CARDINAL'S STATEMENT DO NOT OFFER ANYTHING VERY CONCRETE TO THE RELATIVES. THEY WOULD, HOWEVER, GUARANTEE THAT THE FATE OF THE DISAPPEARED PERSONS WOULD BE A CONTINUING EXPLICIT CONCERN OF THE CHURCH: EVEN IF ALL PENDING COURT CASES ARE CLOSED AS A RESULT OF THE AMNESTY OF APRIL, AN INSTITUTIONALIZED WEEKLY REMINDER WILL HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED.
LANDAU

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